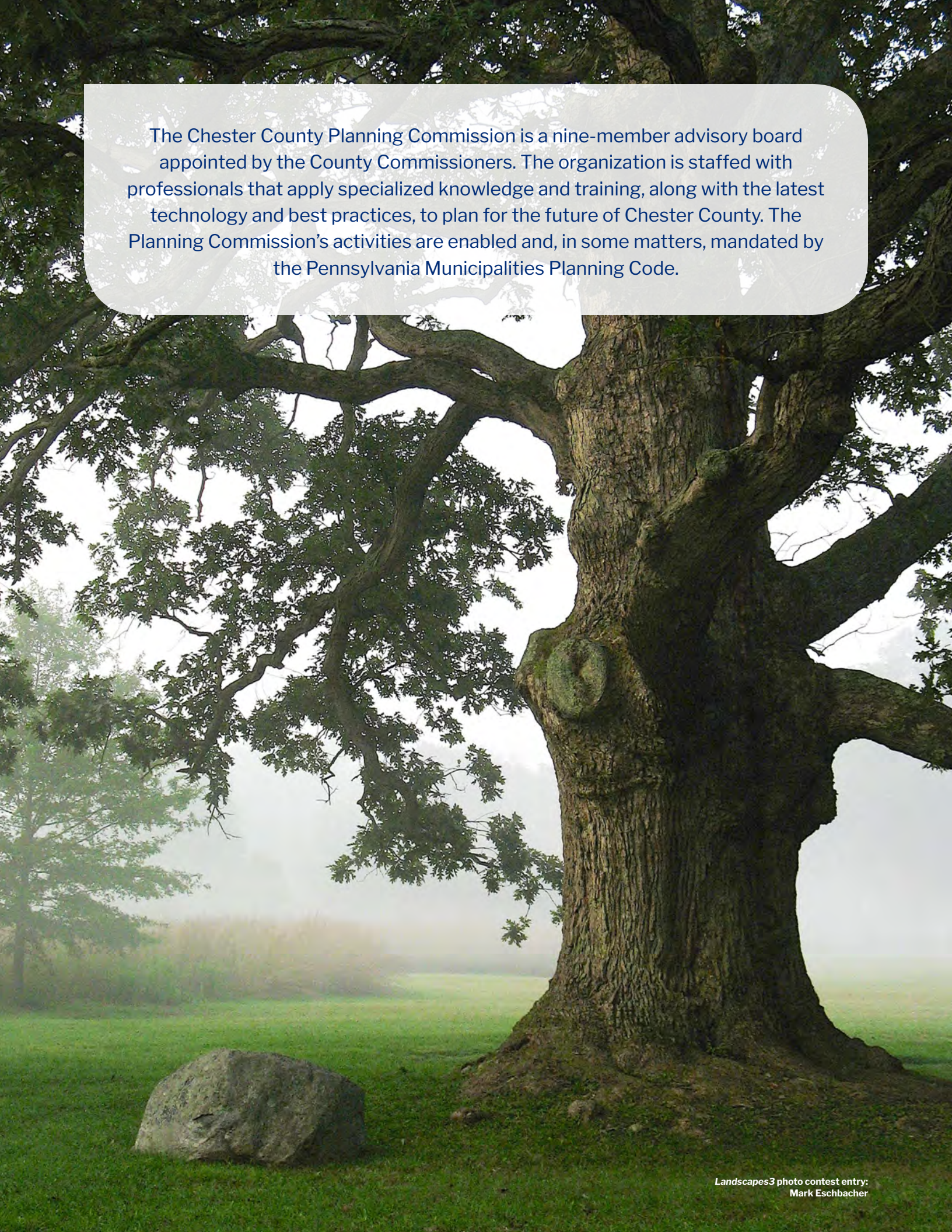


CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2018



The Chester County Planning Commission is a nine-member advisory board appointed by the County Commissioners. The organization is staffed with professionals that apply specialized knowledge and training, along with the latest technology and best practices, to plan for the future of Chester County. The Planning Commission's activities are enabled and, in some matters, mandated by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.



Looking Forward with Focus

The Chester County Planning Commission is pleased to submit this annual report for the calendar year 2018. This past year's work at the Planning Commission continued to reflect its mission—to provide future growth and preservation plans to citizens, so

that they can enjoy a Chester County that is historic, green, mobile, and prosperous.

The Planning Commission's work program for 2018 was dominated by the preparation of *Landscape3*, the county's new comprehensive plan. In addition to the unprecedented public outreach during the previous 18 months, a considerable number of meetings, presentations, and community events were held to ensure *Landscape3* included the goals important to the county, its residents, and business owners. Because of the collaborative effort that occurred through the extensive process, we are proud to report that *Landscape3* was officially adopted by the county commissioners on November 29, 2018. I would personally like to thank all those who helped shape *Landscape3* into a plan for balancing preservation and growth for years to come. In addition, I applaud the Planning Commission staff for their efforts and hard work! Please go to www.chescoplanning.org/Landscape3 to see the plan and learn more about the future of the county.

Most individuals I have talked to about *Landscape3* and its adoption say the same thing, "Congratulations, all of the hard work is done now!" Unfortunately, this is far from the truth. While a significant amount of time was spent outlining the goals of the county, we must now focus on implementing the plan. In 2019, the Planning Commission's work program is focused on implementing *Landscape3* goal areas: PRESERVE, PROTECT, APPRECIATE, LIVE, PROSPER, and CONNECT. The implementation of the plan will be measured on an annual basis through the tracking of 18 metrics to ensure the plan is achieving its goals.

We will also continue to focus on improving communication with our partners and the public. The Planning Commission's website is continuously updated with information on a wide range of topics, as well as social media posts, articles, and news bulletins, etc. Increased communication provides a better understanding of what is important to county residents and stakeholders which, in turn, will help us achieve the goals set forth in *Landscape3*.

I would also like to acknowledge the retirement of two individuals who have had a considerable impact on the Planning Commission and the county. Judy DiFilippo retired

from the board after serving the county and its residents for 16 years. She was involved in both *Landscape2* and *Landscape3* and was chairwoman of the board for 10 years. Under her leadership, many countywide goals were achieved, including the county's significant investment in the preservation of open space. David Ward retired from the Planning Commission as assistant director after 42 years of service. That is not a typo, 42 years! David is one of the main reasons the Planning Commission is seen as an innovator and leader among county planning commissions throughout the country. I would like to thank both Judy and David for their tireless efforts toward making the county what it is today and for their leadership in guiding the staff and board. We wish them well in their retirement.

We are looking forward to a prosperous 2019 and will need your help to continue making Chester County the best place to live, work, and play. Please go to www.chescoplanning.org to see the latest information the Chester County Planning Commission has to offer.

Matthew Hammond, P.E., Chairman



David D. Ward, AICP and Judy DiFilippo were honored at the December board meeting for their dedication and leadership.

Chester County's Comprehensive Plan

2018 was a pivotal year for the Planning Commission. The work program was dominated by the development of the county's new comprehensive plan, *Landscapes3*, with virtually every staff member involved in some aspect of the plan's development. Over the next decade, the plan will:

- Establish a preservation and growth vision for the county and its municipalities
- Guide county government decision-making
- Guide local municipal planning and implementation
- Provide a framework for collaboration across municipal boundaries

Process

Development of *Landscapes3* built on the collaborative processes that made *Landscapes* and *Landscapes2* so successful. Opportunities for offering comments, ideas, and concerns were provided throughout the multi-year process in a wide array of options.



14 Stakeholder Meetings	7 Stakeholder Surveys	1 Public Survey	28 Community Events	10 Steering Committee Meetings	6 Public Meetings	71 Presentations Audiences: chambers of commerce, municipalities, schools, engineers, regional groups, and more	2 Photo Contests
255 Stakeholders	1,036 Survey Responses	5,978 Survey Responses	700 Interactions	27 Members	240 Participants		600 Entries

Core Principles

Balancing preservation and growth remains the central theme of all the *Landscapes* plans. To continue this balance, *Landscapes3* recommits to core principles that will position the county and its municipalities for success, including:

Resource Preservation

Recommit to protecting the county's open spaces, natural areas, and historic landscapes

Revitalized Centers

Guide compatible growth to the county's urban and suburban centers

Housing Diversity

Provide for diverse and affordable housing meeting the needs of all residents

Transportation Choices

Expand public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle networks

Collaboration

Promote effective multi-municipal and partner cooperation

Resiliency

Respond to changing markets, technology, and environmental forces





Achieving the Vision

In addition to completing *Landscapes3*, the Planning Commission's 2018 work program centered on implementing *Landscapes2*. In 2019, the focus will be on implementing *Landscapes3* through the Landscapes Map and the plan's six goal areas: PRESERVE, PROTECT, APPRECIATE, LIVE, PROSPER, and CONNECT.

Landscapes Map

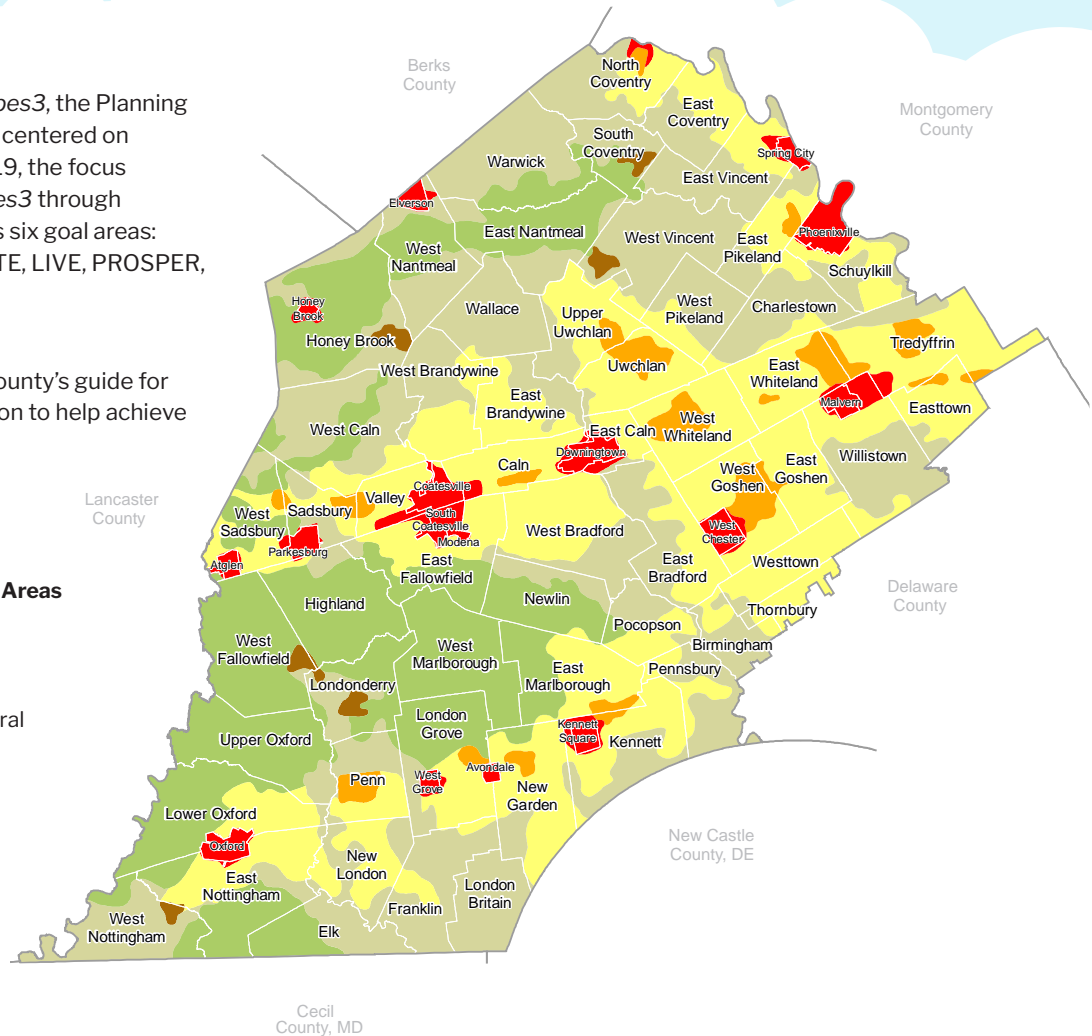
The Landscapes Map is Chester County's guide for growth and rural resource protection to help achieve our vision.

Growth Areas

-  Urban Center
-  Suburban Center
-  Suburban
-  Rural Center

Rural Resource Areas

-  Rural
-  Agricultural




Providing Development Review Services


Consistency with the Landscapes Map is part of the [Act 247 review process](#) for subdivisions, land developments, ordinances, and plans. For some land development proposals, the Planning Commission prepares drawings to illustrate enhanced site layout recommendations.

In 2018, much of the proposed development occurred in core employment and development areas, including Phoenixville, Great Valley, Exton, West Chester, Downingtown, and Kennett. An overview of the proposals reviewed follows:

Residential Proposals

 Residential lots/units increased significantly, from 2,803 lots/units in 2017 to 3,679 in 2018.


Apartments remained the largest proposed housing type (1,482 in 2018, versus 1,208 in 2017), followed by townhouses (959 in 2018, versus 800 in 2017), and single-family detached homes (1,061 in 2018 versus 610 in 2017).

 This was the first year since 2009 that the Planning Commission reviewed more than 1,000 single-family detached lots/units in a single year.

Non-residential Proposals

 Non-residential square footage declined, from 2.67 million square feet in 2017 to 2.05 million square feet in 2018.

Municipal Ordinance Proposals

 135 ordinance, comprehensive plan, and conditional use submissions were reviewed. There was a 35 percent decrease in the number of reviews compared to 2017 (208), which was the highest annual total since 2007 and attributable to the mandatory update of all municipal floodplain ordinances.

Sketch Plan Proposals

 10 sketch plans were reviewed, the largest number in one year since 2006 (18).

Partnering with Municipalities

Local municipalities are on the front line of implementing smart growth.

The **Vision Partnership Program (VPP)** provides financial and technical support to municipalities seeking to update their planning efforts that implement *Landscapes*. In 2018, approximately \$250,000 was awarded under the VPP grant program to eight projects across 11 municipalities, leveraging \$157,000 in local funds. Since inception, the county has awarded \$7.2 million, leveraging \$3.4 million of local funds.



Elverson Borough Zoning & Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances

Modernized land use regulations to align with the borough's urban center characteristics

VPP Projects

- Municipalities with projects completed by Planning Commission staff in 2018
- Other municipalities with active VPP projects in 2018

Atglen Borough Comprehensive Plan

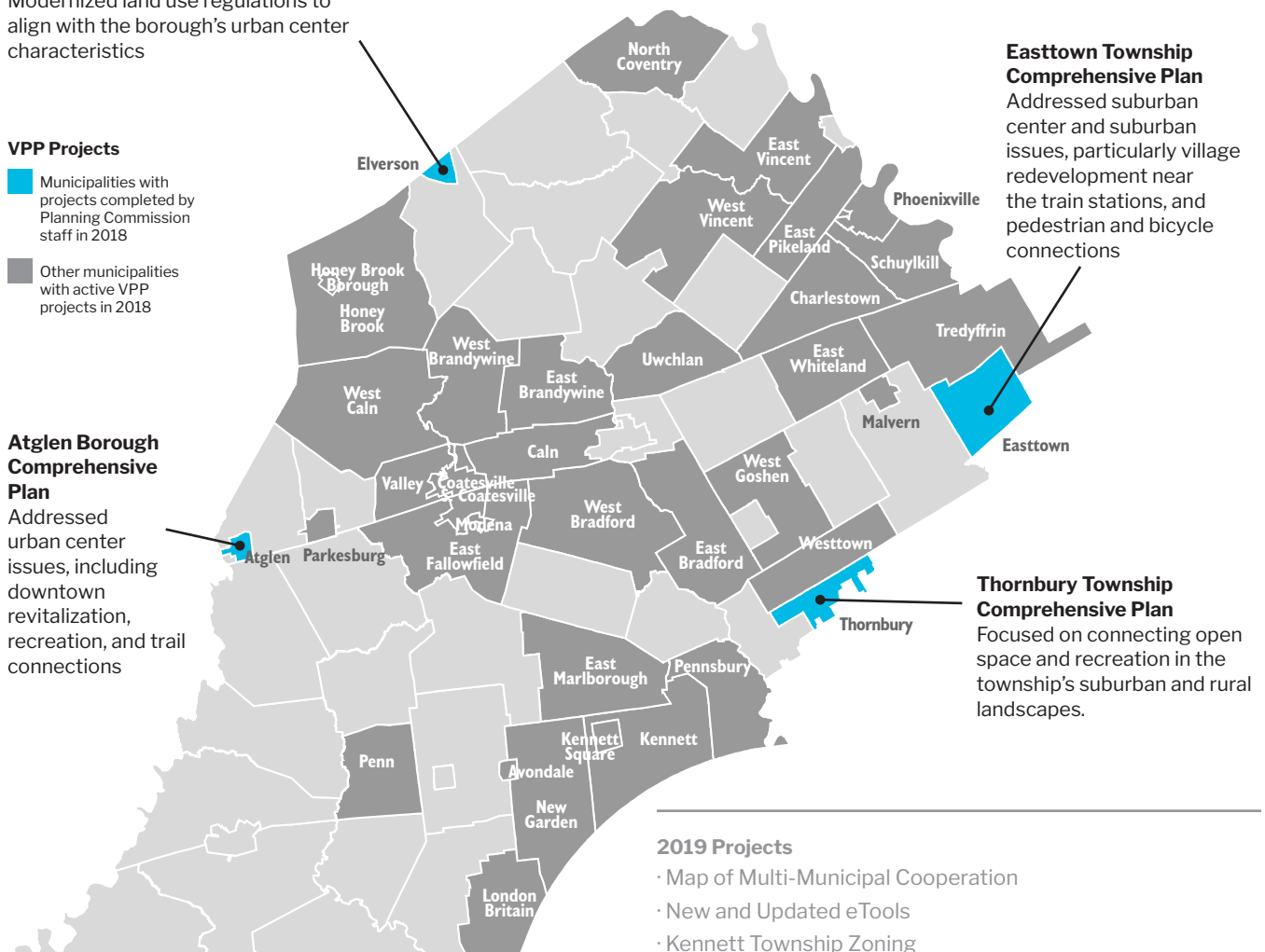
Addressed urban center issues, including downtown revitalization, recreation, and trail connections

Easttown Township Comprehensive Plan

Addressed suburban center and suburban issues, particularly village redevelopment near the train stations, and pedestrian and bicycle connections

Thornbury Township Comprehensive Plan

Focused on connecting open space and recreation in the township's suburban and rural landscapes.



2019 Projects

- Map of Multi-Municipal Cooperation
- New and Updated eTools
- Kennett Township Zoning
- Thornbury Township Zoning
- North Coventry Township Comprehensive Plan
- Parkesburg Borough Comprehensive Plan

Goal Area Projects



Protected Open Space Tracking (POST)

The Planning Commission **tracks protected open space** annually in conjunction with the Department of Open Space Preservation, land trusts, municipalities, and other preservation partners. At the start of 2018, 136,000 acres, or 28 percent of the county, was protected open space. During the year, there were a number of open space successes, such as the continued preservation of the Strawbridge property and the preservation of additional farmland.

Partnership with Department of Open Space Preservation

The Planning Commission coordinated with the Department of Open Space Preservation on open space initiatives and *Landscapes3* implementation project strategies.

2019 Projects

- Economic Value of Protected Open Space Study
- Open Space Summit
- POST Update and Annual Report

Act 537 Sewage Facility Reviews

52 sewage facility plan updates and amendments were reviewed, including three major plan updates.

Partnership with Water Resources Authority

The Planning Commission supported the ongoing implementation of *Watersheds*, the county's integrated water resources plan and Act 147 Stormwater Plan, by promoting sound stormwater management.

2019 Projects

- Natural Resource Protection Standards Inventory
- Municipal Outreach Program for Natural Resources Protection
- Assistance with *Watersheds* Update Process

How We APPRECIATE

historic buildings
historic viewsheds
cultural landscapes • villages
historic town centers



Protection of Historic Bridges

The Planning Commission continued to serve as a resource for identifying ways to protect the county's historic bridges.

Education and Historic Interpretation

The 2018 **Town Tours and Village Walks** focused on the roots of industry and innovation. This annual series introduces the public to the great and varied historic resources around the county. More than 2,000 participants attended 13 events in this year's series.

Historic Preservation Training

Three events, a leadership luncheon, spring workshop, and annual volunteer celebration were held in coordination with the Chester County Historic Preservation Network. In addition, the spring and fall Planner's Forums reviewed historic preservation initiatives and programs.

Brandywine Battlefield Protection

Plans for the preservation and interpretation of the Brandywine Battlefield continued to be developed in cooperation with the National Park Service and local municipalities.

2019 Projects

- National Register Historic Resources Interactive Map
- Brandywine Battlefield Study
- Adaptive Reuse Design Guide
- Town Tours and Village Walks Series

How We LIVE

neighborhoods • housing
community facilities • parks and recreation
community health



Summary of Housing Data

The **Annual Housing Report** indicated the median housing value in 2017 rose to \$337,000, a 6.5% increase over the prior year. A total of 1,675 units were built in 2017, with 39% of these multi-family, 31% single-family attached, and 30% single-family detached.

Local Housing Assistance

Staff provided coordination and support to various organizations and municipalities working to improve housing options, and used social media and other outlets to highlight issues and best practices around housing, community facilities, and public health.

Affordably-Priced Housing Event and Data Analysis

In partnership with Chesco2020, the Planning Commission co-sponsored this event that presented an **analysis of existing housing costs** in Chester County.

Partnership with Municipalities

VPP grants were awarded to East Whiteland and East Marlborough for open space, park and recreation plans.

2019 Projects

- Affordable Housing Online Tools
- Multi-Family Housing Zoning Opportunities Map
- Housing Summit
- Housing Units Built and Sales Prices Report

How We

PROSPER

job centers • business parks
main streets • industrial areas
retail centers • agriculture



Urban Centers Assistance

The Planning Commission’s urban centers planner provided technical support, coordinated meetings between municipalities and economic development advocates, and updated infrastructure project lists. The **Annual Urban Center Forum**, which focused on housing, was also supported.

Opportunities Maps

- For **Coatesville**, GIS specialists at the Planning Commission created an online interactive map of amenities, recent public and private investments, and development opportunities.
- For **Route 1** and **Route 724**, these mapping specialists created online interactive maps highlighting available non-residential development sites along these major transportation routes.

Partnership with Agricultural Development Council (ADC)

Staff continued to support the ADC’s mission and assisted with projects, including the annual **Farm Products Guide**.

Partnership with Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC)

Staff continued to collaborate on economic development strategies and implementation with CCEDC.

2019 Projects

- Redevelopment Map and Analysis
- Urban Centers Assistance
 - Annual Forum
 - Online Tools
 - Urban Center Design Guide
- Non-Residential Construction Report

How We

CONNECT

roadways • sidewalks • trails
public transportation • airports
freight • communications
utilities • energy • pipelines



Walkability Promotion

Staff and the county health department developed a walking route in West Chester as part of the WalkWorks initiative.

Trail Expansion Assistance

- The **Chester Valley Trail West Feasibility Study/Master Plan** was completed.
- Staff supported the Warner Spur Trail Master Plan efforts with Tredyffrin Township and consultant teams.
- Staff continued to move the Schuylkill River Trail project forward with technical assistance.

Information Sharing

Planning Commission staff maintained the Pipeline Information Center and improved access to demographic data on the Planning Commission’s website.

Significant Grant Support

With technical support from the Planning Commission, local municipalities and organizations received almost \$20 million from state and federal programs.

Partnership with Municipalities

- The Transportation Improvement Program of major projects within the region was updated.
- The **Phoenixville Region Multimodal Transportation Study** was completed.

2019 Projects

- Update of Transportation Improvement Inventory
- Municipal Active Transportation Project
- Brandywine Water Trail Study

Board Members

The Chester County Planning Commission is a nine-member advisory board appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

Standing from left: Matthew Hammond, P.E., Chair; Kevin C. Kerr; Douglas A. Fasick, DC, Vice-Chair; Daniel DiMucci, RLA; and Michael Heaberg. Sitting from left: E. Martin Shane; Molly Morrison; Judy L. DiFilippo; and Joseph T. Tarantino.



Staff

Administration Services

Brian O'Leary, AICP, *Executive Director*
 David D. Ward, AICP, *Assistant Director***
 Beth A. Cunliffe, *Office & Communications Manager*
 Suzanne Wozniak, *Administrative Coordinator*
 Marie Celii, *Information Specialist*
 Carolyn Oakley, *Communications Supervisor*
 Danielle Lynch, *Communications Specialist*

Transportation and Information Services

Brian Styche, RLA, AICP, *Division Director*
 Brian Donovan, *Transportation Planner*
 Rachael Griffith, RLA, *Trails and Open Space Planner*
 Heather Martin, *Transportation Planner**
 Eric Quinn, *Transportation Planner*
 Patti Strauber, *Administrative Support*

Infrastructure & Plan Review

Carol J. Stauffer, AICP, *Division Director*
 Glenn Bentley, *Plan Reviewer*
 Wes Bruckno, AICP, *Plan Reviewer*
 Paul Farkas, *Plan Reviewer*
 Jenn Kolvereid, *Land Development Analyst*
 Carolyn Conwell, AICP, *Environmental Planner*
 Jake Michael, AICP, *Demographer*

Technical Services

Paul Fritz, RLA, AICP, *Division Director*
 Gene Huller, *Technical Services Supervisor*
 Doug Meneely, *GIS Specialist*
 Colin Murtoff, *GIS Planner*
 Albert Park, *Design Specialist*
 Diana Zak, *Graphics Supervisor*
 Christopher Bittle, *Graphics Specialist*
 Polly Chalfant, *Graphics Specialist*

Planning Services

Susan Elks, AICP, *Division Director*
 Katherine Clark, *Community Planner*
 Kaitlin Feiler, *Community Planner**
 Mark Gallant, *Community Planner*
 Jaime Jilozian, AICP, *Community Planner*
 Karen Marshall, *Heritage Preservation Coordinator*
 Kevin Myers, *Urban Planner*
 Chris Patriarca, AICP, *Community Planner*
 Jeannine Speirs, *Community Planner*
 Nancy Shields, *Administrative Support*

Agricultural Development Council***

Hillary Krummrich, Esq., *Director*
 Ann Lane, *Program Coordinator*

* Former staff

** Retired

***The Agricultural Development Council staff is part of the Planning Commission and its budget but is not under the oversight of the Chester County Planning Commission's advisory board.

Budget

Expenditures	2016	2017	2018
Personnel Services	\$2,848,948	\$2,887,173	\$3,024,233
Materials & Services	\$179,279	\$226,035	\$216,112
Contributions, Grants, Subsidies	\$179,859	\$179,859	\$179,859
TOTAL	\$3,208,086	\$3,293,067	\$3,420,204

Revenues	2016	2017	2018
Federal	\$302,357	\$295,350	\$251,158
State	\$ 23,500	\$20,984	\$29,016
Local	\$ 35,117	\$27,134	\$45,706
Subdivision/Land Review Fees	\$ 204,714	\$204,473	\$230,749
Misc.	\$ 524	\$913	\$595
TOTAL	\$566,212	\$548,854	\$557,224 *

* Remaining revenue comes from Chester County



Partner with Us

The adoption of *Landscapes3*, our new comprehensive plan, was another planning milestone for Chester County. *Landscapes3*, and the process used to create it, reaffirms the strong preservation and smart growth mindset in the county.

Landscapes3 provides a planning roadmap for the next ten years. The Planning Commission will take a lead role in implementing the plan, but we will need to work with many partners to more fully accomplish *Landscapes3*'s goals. In 2019, the Planning Commission will:

PRESERVE

Support open space preservation by reconfirming the economic value of open space and convening partners in an open space summit

PROTECT

Enhance natural resource protection by assisting municipalities with their environmental ordinances

APPRECIATE

Foster historic preservation with expanded town tours and village walks and new preservation tools

LIVE

Encourage affordably-priced housing with zoning tools, an opportunity map, and a housing summit

PROSPER

Strengthen our economy and town centers through urban center tools and a county-wide redevelopment map

CONNECT

Improve transportation choices with municipal ordinance analysis, a new Transportation Improvement Inventory, and trail analyses



These are a few of our upcoming projects. We'll be doing significant other work throughout the year to support good planning, including a revamped Vision Partnership Program, updates to our online tools, extensive data and map analysis, enhanced design input in our development reviews, and coordination with all of our partners around the county.

With the implementation of *Landscapes3*, 2019 is going to be another exciting year for planning in the county. I encourage you to partner with us to make *Landscapes3*'s vision a reality.

Brian N. O'Leary
Executive Director



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LinkedIn

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Twitter

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A report to the
Board of County Commissioners

Michelle Kichline
Kathi Cozzone
Terence Farrell

